



**COPEWELL**

**RUBRIC USER'S GUIDE**

# WELCOME

## What is the COPEWELL rubric?

The COPEWELL rubric is a scoring guide that communities can use to assess the major factors that influence their resilience to disasters. Informed by their self-assessment, rubric users can then chart a course of action together to strengthen community functioning before and after a major upset. It is helpful to think of the rubric as having 2 components:

- Worksheets that give users a valid and systematic way to measure themselves, based on the research of community resilience.
- Workshops that bring together diverse stakeholders to complete the worksheets, discuss their findings, and then decide how to act on that knowledge.

## How can using the COPEWELL rubric enhance my community's resilience to disasters?

Communities don't want to respond to disasters just as they happen anymore. The losses are too great, and they are only becoming greater. Breaking with the status quo, communities now want to be resilient: able to anticipate, withstand, recover, and emerge even stronger after an extreme event. But one challenge they face is figuring out how—exactly—to enhance their resilience.

A scoring guide like the COPEWELL rubric enables communities to think and act in more concrete terms about resilience, which can be a hard-to-pin-down objective. By using the COPEWELL rubric, a community can move through a cycle of visioning, planning, and acting [Figure 1].



[Figure 1] Participatory Visioning-Planning-Acting Cycle using the COPEWELL Rubric to enhance community resilience.

Importantly, the rubric gives diverse community members a shared language and a structured process for transforming the idea of resilience into a concrete reality. The very act of convening workshops to conduct a self-assessment and to develop an action plan can itself enhance resilience by fostering more social cohesion and sharpening skills at group problem-solving.

### How do the COPEWELL rubric and computational model compare? Can I use one or the other or both?

The COPEWELL rubric and the computational model are both built on the same fundamental concepts, defined briefly below and in more detail at the link below:

<http://www.copewellmodel.org/about/faqs.html>

- **Community Functioning:** the ability to provide goods and services that support the community's overall well-being and that can be interrupted by a disaster.
- **Resilience: a mixture of 2 forces:** (1) resistance – the ability to maintain the status quo and (2) recovery – the process of returning to normal after a shock to the system.

Both the rubric and the computational model can be used to inform a community's strategic planning to strengthen its resilience to disasters. The main differences between the two scoring guides are (1) the kinds of data that each uses, (2) the scale of the community that each measures, and (3) the "fit" of each scoring guide to end users and their setting.

The computational model relies on publicly available, county-level data. These standardized data allow counties to compare themselves to other counties. In contrast, the rubric is more flexible. Communities of varying scales – not just the county level – can populate the self-assessment worksheets with locally meaningful concerns, remedies, and data. Lastly, the rubric has distilled down the more numerous domains of the computational model into 5 domains that can be more readily discussed in a workshop setting limited by time and other resources.

Communities can use either or both of the two scoring guides, knowing their respective benefits and limits [Table 1]. Local communities that plan to use the rubric, for instance, can still benefit from the county-level maps that the computation model generates. These graphic images can be an important communication tool for sparking conversations, mastering basic concepts, and organizing workgroups around certain topics and interests.

RUBRIC	COMPUTATION MODEL
"Bottom-up" measurement.	"Top-down" measurement.
Participatory process to generate subjective judgments about resilience factors, attuned to local meanings and conditions.	Externally validated indicators and standardized data that enable comparison between common units of analysis.
Compare oneself to oneself over time—motivate by tracking own progress over time.	Compare oneself to others – motivate through spirit of competition.
5 consolidated domains for ease of use during in-person workshops.	19 comprehensive domains for more thorough, impartial, and ongoing tracking.
Key strength: local ownership and flexibility of geo-scale.	Key strength: objectivity and consistency.
Key limits: lack of consistency if users and rationale shift.	Key limits: inflexibility of geo-scale and limited data.

[Table 1] Side by Side Comparison of the COPEWELL Rubric and Computational Model.

# SPECIFIC TOOLS FOR THE RUBRIC USER

## Worksheets:

Rubric users have a set of worksheets with which to conduct a self-assessment of 5 domains that influence community resilience:

- **Community Functioning** – the ability of a community to deliver goods and services to its residents.
- **Population Factors** – the social, political and economic conditions that reduce a person’s ability to detect risk, reduce risk, or recover from risk impacts.
- **Prevention/Mitigation Factors** – measures taken by government, private industry, non-profits, and residents—that reduce the chances for, and consequences of a future extreme event.
- **Social Capital and Cohesion** – the social “glue” of a community, including social networks between individuals, organizations, and governments, and the sense of connectedness among residents.
- **Emergency Management** – the formal processes by which the entire community works to identify and reduce risks and vulnerabilities, and to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Each domain-specific self-assessment worksheet is comprised of the following components:

- **Domain Definition:** an explicit description of the domain being evaluated that gives users a common language and a target with which to focus discussions.
- **Domain “Sub-Factors”:** a breakdown of the domain into smaller, more meaningful parts. Community functioning, for instance, is broken down into governance/economy, life necessities, health and wellbeing, and critical infrastructure.
- **Optimal- and Low-Capacity Descriptions:** qualitative descriptions of what communities might look like if they were doing well or poorly for that domain.
- **Open-Ended, Guiding Questions:** detailed, prompting questions to trigger conversation and enable self-assessment, including identifying data to support a specific rating.
- **Rating Scales:** a colored scale from 1 to 10 against which users can rate sub-factors and create an average rating for the domain as a whole.
- **Rationale:** a section for users to record context, justifications, and other information to enable others to understand the users’ basis for final ratings.
- **Next Steps:** a “parking lot” for capturing ideas about what concrete measures can help strengthen a sub-factor – input needed for developing an action plan.



## Workshops:

For each of the 5 rubric domains, users have an implementation guide with which to convene community workshops for self-assessment and action planning purposes. Each implementation guide includes tools and sample handouts that users can customize to their own settings, timeframes, participants, and aims. For example, workshop organizers may choose to prioritize certain domains for self-assessment and action planning, rather than tackle them all. During a workshop, users may wish to focus on only some of the sub-factors due to time limitations. A community may decide to convene small subgroups with specific expertise individually to produce initial ratings, and then have the whole group debate and plan actions together.

Workshop resources within each implementation guide include:

- **Facilitator's Guide:** a sample script with logistical tips and suggested times that workshop organizers can use to structure workshop conversations, small group breakout sessions, and whole group plenary discussions.
- **Workshop Agenda:** a sample agenda to share with workshop invitees that describes the overall process, workshop objectives, and suggests times for specific tasks.
- **Workshop PowerPoint Slides:** a set of presentation slides that users can adapt to organize the flow of the workshop and introduce participants to major concepts and workshop aims.
- **Small Group Worksheet – How Do We Rate on This Domain Now:** a handout that small breakout session participants can use during a sub-factor self-assessment to collect major discussion points and to share rating decisions and their rationale in a plenary session.
- **Small Group Worksheet – How Do We Strengthen This Domain Further:** a handout that small breakout session participants can use during a sub-factor action planning session to generate a list of possible actions, choose which actions to prioritize, identify champions to own each action, and outline specific tasks and timeframes for executing them.
- **Workshop Evaluation Form:** a pre-prepared form with which workshop organizers can elicit participant feedback on the quality and substance of discussions and intended follow through.
- **Workshop Report Template:** a strawman report that organizers can adapt to summarize workshop proceedings and share with sponsors and attendees to continue conversations and inform follow up activities.

## PRINCIPLES FOR RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE RUBRIC WORKSHOP

Below are some tips on how to run a successful workshop:

- **Leverage and buildout existing stakeholder networks:** Jumpstart your initiative by tapping into relevant conversations already underway and enlisting champions already at work on some

aspect of community resilience. Bring together people who haven't yet had an opportunity to learn from one another and to harness their efforts together. If you happen to begin with a list of the usual suspects, then be sure to reach out to new and different partners. Ask yourself who is typically not at the table but needs to be.

- **Appropriately scope the community resilience project:** Self-assessment and action planning will require investments of time, effort, and follow through. Organizers should be realistic about how much group work can be accomplished with the resources at hand. Is the community resilience initiative going to work through all 5 domains of the rubric or prioritize some over others, depending upon the community context?
- **Explain to stakeholders why their participation counts:** When inviting people to the workshop, explain what the objectives are, why their participation is critical, and what they can expect to get out of attending. Communicate the workshop's value proposition: how does the community endeavor benefit from their expertise and what do they or their organization gain from participation in this group enterprise.
- **Recognize the power of group work:** Acknowledge that coming together strengthens relationships so the workshop is off to a great start. Have participants reflect on the many hats they wear and the importance of those experiences and connections. Bring out the same energy and enthusiasm in the group with meaningful introductions – balanced with the need to get to work relatively quickly. Build time for networking into the agenda.
- **Connect rubric discussions to bigger plans and decisions:** To get the most out of what the rubric can offer, consider how the self-assessment and action-planning findings can feed into larger community decisions and processes. How can rubric-driven discussions help inform the work of a mitigation planning committee, long-term recovery committee, emergency management planning committee, or comprehensive community planning?
- **Be realistic about what can be accomplished in one workshop:** Depending upon available resources—especially participants' time—workshop organizers may wish to split the activities of self-assessment and action planning. As per the Visioning-Planning-Acting Cycle, Workshop One can involve developing a common language, performing the assessment, and starting to strategize. Workshop Two can entail sharing what was learned from the assessment, holding a more in-depth conversation about options, and developing the action plan with individuals and organizations taking ownership.
- **Communicate, communicate, communicate:** The impact of the rubric will hinge in large part on the extent to which people know about and value what the workshop participants have accomplished. Be sure to document rubric discussions. Prepare and broadly disseminate a report on workshop proceedings; this will help to keep the work visible and to communicate its relevance to other planners and decisionmakers. Follow through on the action items and create accountability mechanisms to keep things moving forward.